

UPDATE

Tipping the Scales in Your Favor

Have you decided to start eating healthier and become more physically active? Have you realized that healthy choices have a positive impact on not only yourself, but also those around you?

If your goal is to lose weight or maintain your current healthy weight, here are some tips to help you achieve that goal. Remember, to maintain weight, you must balance calories with the energy you burn through physical activity. If you eat more than you expend, you gain weight. If you eat less (reduce calories) than you expend, you lose weight!

Make healthy choices a habit. This leads to a healthy lifestyle! Make a commitment to eat well, move more, and get support from family and friends. Even better, start eating healthier and being active together!

Remember to be realistic about your goals. If you try to reduce the calories, fat, saturated fat, and sugar in your diet AND promise to make a drastic change in your physical activity level, you may be setting yourself up for failure. Instead of trying to make many changes at once, set smaller, more realistic goals for yourself and add a new challenge each week.

Conduct an inventory of your meal/snack and physical activity patterns. Keep a food and activity journal. Write down not only what you ate, but where, when, and what you were feeling at the time. You will see what triggers your hunger and what satisfies your appetite. What foods do you routinely shop for? What snacks do you keep in the pantry?

Eat at least 5 servings of vegetables and fruits per day. If you're adding fruits and vegetables to your diet, try substituting them for higher calorie, less nutritious foods.

Eat foods that are high in fiber to help you feel full. Whole grain cereals, legumes (lentils and beans), vegetables, and fruits are good sources of fiber that may help you feel full with fewer calories.

Prepare and eat meals and snacks at home. This is a great way to save money, eat healthy, and spend time with your family. When preparing meals, choose low-fat/low-calorie versions of your favorite ingredients and learn how easy it is to substitute. For example:

- Switch to 1% or nonfat milk and low-fat cheeses.
- Use a cooking spray instead of oil or butter to decrease the amount of fat when you cook.
- Prepare baked potatoes with low-fat blue cheese dressing or low-fat plain yogurt instead of butter or sour cream.

Some good web sites to help you plan a healthy meal are:

1. National Institute of Health Menu Planner - <http://www.nih.gov/>
2. American Heart Association - <http://www.deliciousdecisions.org/>

